

BRITANNIA:

A P O E M.

DEDICATED TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

LORD VISCOUNT CAMPERDOWN, &c.

BY JOHN GORTON.

*MYSELF, assiduous, never will surcease
To guard thy welfare : o'er the swelling deep
Myself will steer, and will protect thy Fleets.*

Vide, BRITANNIA.

L O N D O N:

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TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE

ADAM LORD DUNCAN,

VISCOUNT OF CAMPERDOWN, &c.

MY LORD,

ACTUATED, as I am, by a deep-felt spirit of admiration, for your late truly splendid and heroic conduct, which has been so strongly set forth in the defence and preservation of these kingdoms---while there are so many (and, indeed, while all true Englishmen) in some or other way, express their acknowledgments for so essential a blessing, I should consider myself, in the highest respect ungrateful, if, with an equal degree of animation, I did not feel perfectly sensible of your value ; and of the merit of the brave men, who have this war so conspicuously distinguished themselves ; and have so nobly fought, bled, and triumphed for their Country !

As such a tribute, as the fruits of a few leisure hours—and the effusions of a mind sincerely engrossed by such a principle, you will, I humbly hope, my LORD, disdain not to

accept the following little POEM; which, albeit, (as I greatly fear) it may not possess any peculiarity to recommend it; and will, in every point, prove inferior to the praise of such as it would aspire at celebrating---yet, I trust, will, in some measure, have the grandeur of the subject, and the good intentions of its Author to defend its imperfections; and, poor as it is, should it, my LORD, be so fortunate to meet the honour of your approbation, the world will, I doubt not, (over-looking its faults) for the veneration which it bears to your name, at least, receive it with lenity, and peruse it with candour.

I have the honour to be,

My LORD,

With the most unfeigned Respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

Devoted, and humble Servant,

JOHN GORTON.

BRITANNIA.

BRITANNIA.

HUSH'D was the deep—the waves in slumber slept :—
No bustling prow disturb'd the ambient main.
The Sun was sunk—and thro' the tranquil world,
(Save from the moon a glimmer chequer'd), dark
Abforb'd the earth, and intervolv'd the sky.

WHEN fair BRITANNIA, from her lucid sea—
Where rules she solely, and with sceptred sway,
Bids her bold offspring triumph; and maintai
Their boasted charter, render'd them by Heav'n—
Her garment somewhat ruffled, and her mien
Defac'd with anguish ! that, with secret pang,

Prey'd at her bosom—stalk'd majestic forth—
Majestic stalk'd she to her fallen sons,
Whose blood, immingled with her foes subdu'd,
The deep deform'd, to pay the usual tear!
Not caring, for a while, from all the glare
And splendour of her glory, to devote
(As is her way, when such a cause demands)
An hour obsequious, sacred to the dead

DIFFUSIVE o'er her visage, she sustain'd
The beam of joy, immingled with regret—
Joy! for her Isle's success, so lately gain'd—
Regret! for heroes lost in that success:
Yet stamp'd her aspect oft a rising smile,
Which seem'd to publish, that amid the damp,
Which fallen worth demanded from her eye,
A keen invasive spark of gladness, beam'd

Benign,

BRITANNIA.

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Benign, consolatory to her wish,
That BRITONS fell *like* BRITONS!—that her sons,
Fam'd for cool valour and intrepid deeds,
Inur'd to toil, and strung to manly feats—
Undaunted, gen'rous; formidable, free!
Born to command, and not to be enthral'd!
In peace, of gentle manners—stern in war!
Magnanimous, considerate; possess'd
Of ev'ry virtue which exalts the brave,
And makes their name sound dreadful to the foe—
Atchieving, in despite of death, renown!
Had perish'd as her sons—remarking where
Their proud antagonists full low display'd
The victims of their wrath!—and where the corse,
Who durst dispute with them their native right,
The empire of the main—disfigur'd stretch'd,
Lay beaten by the wave: The goddess thus,

While

While unobserv'd, unnotic'd by her eye,
The faithful muse recorded what she spake.

THE dire effects of false ambition, see ;
Which, with a sudden and delusive gloss
Of flatt'ring hopes, hath hither led my foes
Imbitter'd, to imbibe the fatal cup,
And draw the necessary, nauseous draught
Which fires my wrath !—and which my arm inflicts !——
Be such the fate of all who dare usurp
And arrogate to them, what solely's mine !
So sudden and destructive be their fall,
Whose bold audacity would brave, one hour,
My arm's fell vigor !—whose presumptuous thought
Would, but one minute, doubt my vast domain !

As far as ocean laves his ample flood—
As far as either pole—as far as day,

His chariot rolling, flings his azure light,
Unlimited and boundless in its course,
My sov'reign sway, with unresisted might,
The wide abyss shall rule! Where'er the sun,
(Of this stupendous globe the vital lamp,)
His polish'd beam, shall o'er the liquid world
Shoot magnificent—*there* my potent power,
So long establish'd with increasing force,
And, with still added prowess—still shall last!
Lo, where my little Island, strongly wedg'd,
And ramparted with rocks, whose flinty base
Shoots up a promontory to the sky :—
Behold you, where her sturdy timber's growth
Springs emulous to Heav'n! Behold you, where
My splendid Cities in succession rise;
In proud succession!—while from street to street,
Fraught with advantage, busy commerce flies;
With industry, and all the pleasing toil

Which

Which both enriches and ennobles man !——
Behold, another Greece, implanted here !
Her arts, her arms, her gallantry the same——
Her love of freedom, and her constant hate
Of what would humble, lessen, or debase.
Survey her happy, and her fruitful soil,
With ev'ry good replenish'd ! See where wave
Her plenteous harvests ; and where smile her plains——
Behold, unnumber'd flocks with gladness graze——
Behold, unnumber'd oxen break the glebe——
Unnumber'd vegetables deck the ground——
Unnumber'd flow'rs emit a rich perfume——
Unnumber'd beauties, both for use and grace,
For profit and for pleasure, ev'ry where
Profusely grand, and infinitely good,
Exuberantly rise : while o'er the mead,
The jocund swain, his heart expanding, sings
To cheerful labour, and approves his fate.

That

THAT rank contagion, which, with ruthless hate,
Thy plains hath ravag'd, GALLIA, fruitless here ;
Where liberty her sway, diffusing wide,
Hath fix'd, with sure stability, her seat,
Must ineffectual sicken : all thy arts
Will but the more expose thee—all thy fraud,
With juster estimation, here will meet
The due neglect it merits. When, at first,
My copious genius, thro' my Britons' breasts,
The genuine soul of freedom pour'd profuse,
And taught them to be free—my wisdom then,
Which actuated all their schemes, matur'd
And ripen'd all their plots.—The genial flame,
Which once pervaded Greece, and brighten'd Rome,
Rekindled hither, with a brighter blaze,
Glow'd at its height ! at its meridian, then,
Their staunch deliberations bid it flame ;
And fix'd its structure with a base so firm,

That

That the rude tooth of all-devouring time
Might not consume its umpire ! ever since
Has Britain been what once was ancient Greece—
And what imperial Rome. Fair science then,
From whither superstition weigh'd her wings,
And bore them down despotic—pleas'd to try
If haply, in some other realm, her voice
Might more respect command ; her flight resum'd,
And hither bent she, with my gladden'd sons
To build her fane ; and hither fix her fway,
Till the dread dissolution swallow all.

TRANSCENDENT Isle ! may long thy glories bloom,
With lasting strength and undiminish'd grace !
May peace enhance the lustre of thy bliss,
And war's rude shock but serve to fix more sure
The basis of thy honor ! May the foe
Who dare insult thee, shrink beneath thy arm,

Confounded

Confounded and abashed ! with added blaze
May fame resound thy name to distant realms,
And fortune add new laurels to thy brow.—

MYSELF, assidious, never will surcease
To guard thy welfare : o'er the swelling deep
Myself will steer, and will protect thy fleets—
Triumphant still, thy navies shall subdue
The pride of GALLIA, and the strength of SPAIN.—
When ruthless war, with unrelenting front,
Sets bloody rapine loose, and bids their powers,
With baleful purpose, to supplant thy sway,
Combine with those of HOLLAND, all their schemes
Reverted back upon themselves, I'll turn,
And work their ruin with their own complots !
Conspicuous then, my guardian pow'r shall send
Thee constant succour, and perpetual aid :—
And when stern danger shall around thee stalk,

And

And ev'ry where envelope thee, my arm—
Which never fail'd thee—then shall straight command,
To pluck new bays, and bid fresh glories bloom,
To deck thy temples, and adorn thy head,
To honor dear, and dignified, and great,
AN HOWE, a JERVIS, and a DUNCAN rise !

AN HOWE, a JERVIS, and a DUNCAN, then,
Illustrious chiefs ! shall by their prowess high,
Thy glory perfect, which so long hath dawn'd ;
And swelling to maturity thy fame,
Shall bring to full completion. O'er the deep
A long attending train of gallant feats,
Shall memorise their name. Their matchless arms
With so severe, so fierce a stream, shall rage,
As to annul resistance. When my HOWE,
With all his ardour o'er th' embosom'd main,
Invincible, shall dash the power of FRANCE—

Not less indignant shall my thunder roar,
When gallant JERVIS humbles that of SPAIN :—
Or, when triumphant, dauntless DUNCAN, fells,
At one dire blow, the whole BATAVIAN power !
By me dictated, See ! where moves my first—
Infus'd with fortitude, to meet my foe !
See, where repulses he her boasted power,
And blasts her latest hopes !—By me inspir'd,
See where my second, proud IBERIA's force,
With half the numbers, fearless he assaults,
And beats resistless—as, when unrestrain'd,
A torrent loosen'd, bends its furious way,
And cannot be restricted—lo ! you, where
His dastard opponents, with dire amaze,
Stand horribly appall'd. Ignobly vain,
Rely'd they only on superior force :
Alone in numbers trusted they their hope—
But, vain is numbers to true worth oppos'd !

And

And vain the arm whose vigor sloth's unstrung,
To that confronted, which true courage fires.

By me dictated, genuine courage fires
My chosen sons, and tracks them up to war.—
By me dictated, valiant DUNCAN, see—
Disseminating wide her boasted strength,
Subdue BATAVIA! What avails thee there,
Thy valour, HOLLAND, when superior that
Which bids thee humble, and which bids thee stoop?
Ah! what thee benefits a brave despair,
When intrepidity, with coolness join'd,
And magnanimous calmness—bids thee stoop?
Lo, where magnificent my heroes sweep,
And hang, incumbent, o'er the subject sea,
That owns their trident, and allows their sway.
Lo, where my ONSLOW and my TROLLOPE wave,
With dread PELLEW, and with advent'rous SMITH—

Where

Where HOOD, undaunted, subjugates the West ;
And where my BRIDPORT, fast within her Port
Locks my adjacent enemy. Lo, where
My brave St. VINCENT checks the power which once
His arm had chastis'd ! Lo, you, ev'ry where,
Where o'er her regions rolls the chrystal deep,
From either Ind to Ethiop's golden shore,
My Britain's prowefs wander unconfin'd ;
And unresisted, subject all the main.

My Britain's prowefs, unabating, still,
With equal lustre, and with equal power,
Secure shall last : Unlimited, her sway,
While azure ocean o'er his confine rolls,
Shall still be absolute. When Heav'n conven'd,
In awful senate met, to fashion fate,
And to prefix her bounds—important then,
Invariably her counsel, this resolv'd,

And wrought it in a statute. When in vain,
To find stability, shall science range,
With intrepidity, and with the arts—
And Egypt in her tour—and Greece and Rome
Shall take successive, after futile toil,
And various evolutions---when assur'd
Of her impracticability to rest
Upon a solid basis—fully tir'd
Of an unsettled sway and fruitless search ;
And this determining, again to plunge
Th' unsettled world in barb'rous dissonance ;
And to immerse once more within the depth
From which she extricated, haply then,
By some good fortune, shall she settle here ;
And here shall found her empire. Then that peace
So long which fought she, but without effect,
No longer hostile to her, nor averse—
No more shall blast her wishes ; but secure,

Shall

Shall nobly fix her on a sure domain,
And bid her flourish permanent and great.

To thee indebted, CLARK, thy country owes
The first great naval tactic, how to break,
With dread discomfiture and horror dire,
Her line arrang'd, and discompose the foe ;
Admiring of that genius, which sublime,
Breaks unrestricted, over each restraint ;
And ev'ry petty and embarrass'd case
Which would deter thy progress ; trusting not
To formal practice, but itself alone---
Confiding not in practical surveys,
But in unaided theory---secure,
Without research ; and confident, not vain :---
Thee, first my DUNCAN patronis'd : thee first
My northern hero, conscious of thy worth,

And of thy patriot principle, which burns
With unabating ardour---forth conjur'd
From that obscurity which long had hid
Thy many latent virtues, may they long
Remain thy honour, and thy country's boast ;
And may thy noble patron live to see
New wreaths implanted from thy matchless art,
Enhance his glory. But, what glory more
For him abides ?---full well hath he attain'd
His height of grandeur ; imitative, let
New warriors rise, and emulate his acts ;
And learn from him to conquer : let them still
Maintain thy law ; with which so well have wrought
My brave commanders, this my naval war,
Such feats unequalld. This, my potent arm,
Alike if sanguine prove their hopes,

Shall

Shall still conduct them where fresh conquests wait ;
And with unfading garlands, crown their deeds.

AND ye, who move in one continued sphere
Of greatness and of grandeur---to whose charge
Hath Heav'n distributed her choicest gifts,
With grateful purpose to dispense their good,
Where worth exacts, and virtue claims a share ;
Inform'd from hence, how laudable the task
To seek that solitude where genius pines,
And call her each perfection forth to light---
This purpose consummating, bid your search
Explore where science, unregarded, lies ;
And where, unnotic'd, genuine merit droops ;
Assur'd by me, be certify'd, your pains
Will not be useless : Many a beauteous bud
Hath in obscurity been left to die !

Which, had your fost'ring patronage approv'd,
 Ere now, to full maturity arriv'd,
 And amply perfected in ev'ry grace,
 Your care had compensated.---Let no more,
 My gen'rous Britons ! *Genius*, my best friend,
 By you be slighted !---learn to vindicate
 And estimate her virtues : When she eyes
 Your equal ardour at the genial flame,
 Her hidden excellence---till then immur'd
 In deep oblivion---with more copious views,
 Will straight enlarge ; and, with an ampler scope,
 Will beam magnificent, and full and clear.

PRESUMPTUOUS GALLIA ! where are now thy threats,
 Which, giant like, so dread an aspect bore ;
 And which so lately, so horrific glar'd ?---
 Dispers'd and scatter'd are they, as thy fleet ;

Which

Which durst, ill-faced, where HIBERNIA boasts
Her loyal sons, provoke my wrath arous'd,
And blow my keen resentment into rage!
Ignobly proud, and insolently vain!
Elate in thought, in execution poor---
In words high-swelling, but in deeds deject---
Bombastic, changeful---miserable, frail :---
Fond of new projects---destitute of means
To put them into practice---firm in plan,
But impotent in act :---with this, this hour
Pleas'd, past idea! surfeited the next!---
An Hydra-headed monster, to whose taste
No form of rule, for three successive days,
Is palatably fix'd.---Irresolute;
Pleas'd with false fire, and fond of false pretents.---
How could'st thou, GALLIA, hope to taint my sons;
And, by invading, teach them to revolt
From all their dearer privileges! How,

When

When pure inartificial reason, bids
My gallant Britons lavish all their blood,
For which their ancestors, through many an age,
Unwearied labour'd, and undaunted bled !
Unprecedented ! durst thy arrogance
Presume, but for an instant, to divert
The Sons of Freedom from her sacred shrine,
And hold a bait to lure them from their rights !

How durst thou, GALLIA ! hope to taint my sons ;
When, for a full assurance they possess
That liberty they boast. Your view you need
No further cast, than where my GEORGE presides ;
In ev'ry regal dignity array'd,
And clad munificent, with ev'ry grace.
In him, their monarch, energetic see
All excellence concentred : up to him,
As to their common fire, his people look ;

As conscious of his virtues :---highly lov'd
By Heav'n and by his people---truly great,
And liberally good---possess'd of that
Which both endears, and renders him endear'd :
Benevolent, and open and sincere ;
And affable and frank---the friend of worth,
The scourge of falshood, and the bane of vice :---
Succinctly view in him, at once, the friend,
The father, and the patriot---that he lacks
Which throws a fully o'er the human breast ;
And that possesses only which displays
An heart which streams with pure benevolence ;
And in its boundless circuit, flows to all.

With fertilizing stream, his graces still
Diffusive shall be pour'd : from him, their head,
The fount of all their treasures, copious down,
In one glad torrent rushing, shall be roll'd,

The

The tide of bliss impetuous ; form'd by him,
And by his precepts, to superior deeds,
That sure reward, which is the meed of worth,
And ever waits on virtue, shall attend
An imitative people ; never yet
Has fail'd the sequel ; and it never shall ;
But more impressive, with a stronger ebb,
And one compulsive current, still shall flow ;
As firmer grows their energy and fire,
The lasting source of inexhausted good.

Oh, Peace ! thou first of blessings, and thou chief ;
Whose task benificent, it is to sooth
The rage of war ; and bid, where anger glow'd,
Long time resentful, thy endearing tie
Calm the wild whirlwind of a captious wrath,
And stay the tempest of a rooted hate !——
Advance ! thou best of nymphs ! from where too long

Thy

Thy vivid beam is hid---possess'd of thee,
What tides of wealth, unebbing, should not roll
To bless my Britain! What unnumber'd fleets,
For her their streamers curling, should not fail:
What ports to her should not unlock the means
Of yielding her abundance? O'er the main,
What power is that from which she should not claim
A due obedience? Where is situate,
Remote or near, the region who should not
Be instrumental in some new supplies,
To raise her traffic, and secure her power?

ADVANCE! thou best of nymphs! from where too long
Thy vivid beam is hid. No longer coy,
Permit, fair Goddess, rude ungentle war,
Thy sceptre to usurp: thy smile again,
Where frowns contention, placably resume;
And chase each foul and sultry mist away,

That

That would obscure thy visage—thro' the world,
Once more, mild form! thy gentle rule display—
And bid, where rugged, and where brutal arms
Too long, hath undistinguish'd, levell'd man,
Preside thy soothing and endearing arts.

HAIL! happy, and all hail, propitious hour,
When peace alone, shall universal sway,
And war shall be no more!—when man to man,
Fair concord breathing, and unruffled love,
Shall banish from the world, th' unfocial blast
That kindles war; and, propagating wrath,
Commands rude discord and uncultur'd rage,
To range revengeful! Welcome, halcyon day!
When all the nations, with a solemn tie,
Thy gen'ral genial influence shall cheer,
And hold it sacred by a common vow—
Where they the smallest vestige shall survey,

To

To threat thy mild dominion—with one voice,
Repentful, to repulse th' envenom'd plague,
And check the rising mischief.—Happy years !
What bliss encircling, shall revolve ye round,
When but one unanimity shall blefs,
And one unbias'd fuffrage reach to all.

For these my fons, whose blood ennobled stains
Where aged ocean laves his ancient flood,
And rolls his waves majestic—tho' the tear
Be virtue's meed, and due to fallen worth—
And tho' they've had a dear and juft revenge,
Unconquer'd ftill, their purer part fhall mount,
With former heroes to maintain their fhare ;
And live, enraptur'd, with unfading blifs,
And bask in confummate and ceafelefs joy !—
There dauntlefs FAULKNER and my HERVEY, there,
With many others more, fhall join the band—

Who,

Who, like themselves, thro' many a distant age,
Where honor and their country's weal requir'd,
Had combated and bled! My BURGESS, there
Illustrious, shall be tender'd to the train,
And infinitely meet with due applause:—
And when new wars, by captious neighbours fed,
Shall threat my Britain, then my gallant chiefs
Who fell in this—delighting to survey
Their country's welfare, which themselves had nurs'd—
And pleas'd to draw them from their joys awhile,
To yield her their protection—still shall fire
My youth, with sentiments their bosom felt;
And with that courage, with the which they wrought
Such deeds unparallel'd—their spirit still,
Which freedom dictated—shall actuate,
And with contagious force, from age to age—
The lasting pledge of unremitted good—

Shall

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Shall arbitrary roll, from fire to son,
Till Sol shall rise, and time shall be no more !

THIS said—the Goddess and her airy train
Sunk from the view ; and nought was to be seen
But the grey twilight, breaking in the East—
And nought distinguish'd, was to be observ'd,
Save the rude clamour of the sounding wave.

